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Chair: Mr. Hilale ..... (Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 72: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.45, A/C.3/70/L.47 and A/C.3/70/L.67)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.45: Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

2. **Mr. Grant** (Canada) said that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran had made repeated commitments to eliminate discrimination against women and members of ethnic minorities and to give more space to freedom of expression and opinion. Although those were steps in the right direction, no concrete measures had yet been taken to achieve those aims. In the five years since the Islamic Republic of Iran had completed the first cycle of the universal periodic review, it had implemented completely or partially only 28 per cent of the recommendations accepted.

3. Given the gravity and persistence of human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the lack of true cooperation with international human rights mechanisms, it was all the more urgent for the General Assembly to express its concern about the human rights situation in the country. The present draft resolution enabled the international community to make considerable improvements to the situation and provided extremely necessary assistance for human rights defenders, who considered it to be an essential tool for the promotion of respect for human rights in the country. The draft resolution was fact-based and balanced, welcoming areas where improvements had been made and deploring areas where many human rights violations continued. It was also forward-looking, calling on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to enact meaningful changes to improve the human rights situation, including by eliminating discriminatory requirements on who could stand for elections and restrictions on freedom of expression during elections.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Albania, New Zealand, Palau and Vanuatu had joined the list of sponsors.

5. **Ms. Vraila** (Greece) said that her delegation wished to withdraw its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

6. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the draft resolution marked a significant setback for the United Nations human rights mechanisms and represented a selective and politicized distortion of facts. While the entire international community had welcomed the conclusion of the nuclear deal, which had been the result of his country's policy of constructive engagement with the world, Canada had continued its unreasonably hostile policy against the Islamic Republic of Iran through baseless speculation in a draft resolution that misled the international community about the true situation of human rights in the region.

7. The world was facing serious threats to the most fundamental human rights by violent extremists. It was highly alarming and telling that many of the new recruits of terrorist groups had been born and raised in countries that were sponsoring the draft resolution, thus manifesting in the most absurd fashion their frustration with marginalization and unabated xenophobic tendencies in those countries. Instead of misguided and politically charged attempts to widen that gap, which had been the approach of the previous Government of Canada, the common global threat of extremism and violence must be combatted by all. The new Government of Canada, on the basis of the pledges it had made during its election campaign, should depart from the outdated policy of politicizing human rights and engage in dialogue instead of confrontation.

8. His Government had implemented substantive measures since assuming office. It continued to fulfil its obligations under the universal periodic review mechanism, was pushing a citizen's charter of rights through the legislative body and had pronounced its readiness to engage in a genuine human rights dialogue with interested countries. It had successfully presented its national report on the implementation of recommendations accepted during the first cycle of the universal periodic review at the twentieth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in October 2014. The majority of those recommendations had been accepted by his country and it had started implementing the recommendations accepted in the second cycle. His Government was ready to engage in a serious, constructive and results-oriented dialogue on human rights, based on good faith

and mutual respect. The draft resolution simply did not serve that purpose.

9. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

10. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that adoption of the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran would undermine the credibility of the political and legal terms of reference in the area of international relations, particularly given the fact that international consensus had already been reached on a mechanism for dealing with human rights issues, namely the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council. As a position of principle, his delegation categorically rejected the selective use of human rights issues to interfere in other States' domestic affairs under the pretext of humanitarian or legal considerations. Such an approach was contrary to the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which enshrined the principle of the equality and sovereignty of all Member States. Syria would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

11. **Mr. Choe** Myong Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation consistently maintained the principled position of rejecting all politically motivated, confrontational and divisive country-specific resolutions. The freedom of States to maintain and develop economic and political systems of their own choice must be respected, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. His delegation was against all politically motivated actions that infringed upon the sovereignty and integrity of the countries concerned. Interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State under the guise of human rights only served to increase confrontation and, as such, must be rejected by all means. For that reason, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

12. **Ms. Smaila** (Nigeria) said that country-specific resolutions could be invoked in cases of emergency or exceptional situations of continuous, grave and systematic violations of human rights. Such resolutions should be discussed in relation to sexual violence, genocide, ethnic cleansing, systematic exclusion of segments of societies from participation in governance and the full enjoyment of equal rights in their own countries, denial of access to economic resources and benefits, racial or ethnic discrimination and confirmed cases of torture and other degrading treatment. Her delegation underscored the importance of thematic mandate holders, whose activities should be guided by the Code of Conduct adopted in the Human Rights Council. The universal periodic review remained the reputable and accepted mechanism for Governments to constructively engage with the Human Rights Council and prove their human rights credentials to the rest of world.

13. There had been a noticeable determination on the part of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to address issues brought to its attention. Her delegation urged the Government to continue with its laudable cooperation with the United Nations, especially the Human Rights Council, towards addressing specific human rights cases. Assurances received from the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran made her delegation hopeful that any outstanding cases related to the rights of ethnic minorities and women would be treated fairly and expeditiously.

14. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador) said that his country fully supported the work of the Human Rights Council, the body empowered to examine human rights situations, in particular through its universal periodic review, which was the appropriate mechanism for achieving progress throughout the world while respecting the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, equal treatment and non-selectivity. Country-specific resolutions did nothing to improve the human rights situations in the countries concerned and were detrimental to relations between States, constructive dialogue and international cooperation. His delegation therefore urged all Member States to put an end to such practices, which were the very practices that had led to the dissolution of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. His Government rejected the continued harassment of certain developing countries for political reasons and would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

15. **Ms. García Gutiérrez** (Costa Rica) said that her delegation had voted in favour of country-specific resolutions out of concern for the human rights situations in those countries. In that regard, Costa Rica believed that all issues to be considered by States should be assessed on their substantive merits, including steps taken by countries to improve their human rights situations. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Council was the competent authority in that area and a more appropriate forum than the Committee for addressing serious cases that required country-

specific consideration. Strengthening the Council's universal periodic review mechanism was the only way to foster the entity's role in promoting and protecting human rights around the world. However, that must not divert the Committee's attention from addressing particularly critical situations in a country-specific manner when necessary. Constructive dialogue and cooperation must continue to guide the road to effective promotion and protection of human rights. She called upon all States to commit to those efforts.

16. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba) said that her delegation would vote against the draft resolution and maintained a principled position against country-specific resolutions, which were based on a punitive and confrontational approach to the issue of human rights. The establishment of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the continued inclusion of that issue in the agenda were politically motivated and did not stem from genuine concern or interest in cooperating with that country. Her delegation objected to the manipulation of human rights to advance a political agenda, to discredit Governments and to attempt to justify strategies aimed at destabilizing some of those Governments. Any mandate imposed on the basis of politicization and double standards was destined to fail. She called on States to promote respectful and constructive dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran based on collaboration and the exchange of good practices, which was the only way to successfully address the human rights challenges facing the international community.

17. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that her country would vote against the draft resolution, which was a clear example of interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State and the exertion of political pressure on the Government of that country. The draft resolution ignored the real human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, did not take into account information presented by the Government to United Nations human rights bodies and contained biased assessments of the situation in the country, including in relation to the universal periodic review. Country-specific resolutions undermined the universal periodic review mechanism and called into question its results. They also continued to escalate confrontation in the discussion of legal situations within the Human Rights Council and its main bodies.

18. **Ms. Sabja** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her delegation would vote against the draft resolution. Country-specific resolutions undermined the sovereignty of States, hindered cooperation and weakened the universal periodic review mechanism, which incorporated the principles of non-selectivity, universality, impartiality, objectivity and respect for national sovereignty. Her Government remained steadfast in its opposition to politicized country-specific resolutions that selectively targeted countries of the South.

19. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.45.*

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu.

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.45 was adopted by 76 votes to 35, with 68 abstentions.*

21. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that his delegation had abstained from the vote. Although it recognized the efforts of Canada to streamline the text, the draft resolution still failed to appropriately reflect the efforts of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to improve the human rights situation in the country. Nevertheless, the rate of executions reportedly still taking place there was a matter of extreme concern, in particular the application of the death penalty to crimes that could not be characterized as the gravest under international human rights law. A moratorium on the use of the death penalty should be considered with a view to its abolition.

22. Brazil remained equally concerned by the human rights situation of women and by violations of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association. The human rights of minorities, especially religious minorities, must be respected, including those not officially recognized by the Government, such as the Baha'i.

23. Recent expressions of the Iranian Government's willingness to engage with the international human rights system should be acknowledged and encouraged by the international community, and such engagement must be strengthened. Its acceptance of most recommendations issued during the universal periodic review should be welcomed, including the invitations extended to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to visit the country.

24. International efforts to engage the Islamic Republic of Iran and support human rights in the country would be better served by the adoption of a more constructive tone that sought to break with the unfruitful path of confrontation. After the historic diplomatic breakthrough in 2015, the international community had a sound basis to renew its investment in diplomacy and dialogue. In that regard, his country had established a bilateral mechanism for discussing human rights issues between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Brazil.

25. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. Japan welcomed the policy of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to address the human rights situation in the country as a matter of priority and recognized the cooperative engagement from the Iranian side in the bilateral human rights dialogues that took place periodically between Japan and Iran. As the Iranian Government continued to develop an improved relationship with the international community, his Government expected to see such efforts in mutual confidence-building translated into concrete progress in the measures and commitments to improve the human rights situation in the country. For those reasons, Japan had supported the draft resolution but had not joined the sponsors. It would continue to engage positively in dialogue and cooperate with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

26. **Mr. Coloma Grimberg** (Chile) said that the promotion and protection of human rights and collaboration with the multilateral human rights system were key elements of his country's foreign policy. In the case of Iran, his Government valued the agreement made by the Iranian authorities to meet with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran in Geneva for the first time and hoped that the Special Rapporteur would be invited to visit the country soon. It was encouraging to note the efforts made by President Hassan Rouhani to improve the situation in his country and the significant agreement on Iran's nuclear programme.

27. His Government was against the use of capital punishment and supported a universal moratorium on the death penalty. For that reason, it was concerned

about the extensive and repeated use of that measure throughout the world. According to the Special Rapporteur, at least 520 people had been executed in Iran in the first half of 2015, and it was not clear whether they had benefited from due process and impartiality before their execution; a sentence that, once applied, was irreversible.

28. The Islamic Republic of Iran should increase cooperation with human rights mechanisms and carefully consider the recommendations from the universal periodic review. Chile would continue to analyse the situation in Iran with full impartiality in order to re-evaluate its position in the future.

29. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation would like to reiterate its principled position regarding country-specific resolutions and special rapporteurs. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela rejected the politically motivated and selective nature of those mechanisms, which flagrantly violated the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity and were a clear example of the use of double standards. Cooperation and dialogue were the most essential principles for the effective promotion and protection of human rights. For that reason, his delegation supported the ongoing appeals made by the Non-Aligned Movement on the issue. Venezuela once again urged the international community to continue the progress made by the Human Rights Council and to prioritize the universal periodic review process and take a collaborative approach to the human rights issue. He called for an end to the selective adoption of country-specific resolutions, which weakened human rights mechanisms.

30. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that it was China's consistent position that any differences in the area of human rights should be addressed through constructive cooperation and dialogue on an equal footing and on the basis of mutual respect. China was opposed to politicizing and exploiting the human rights issue to pressurize other countries and objected to country-specific human rights resolutions. His delegation had therefore voted against the draft resolution. It was incumbent upon the international community to provide the Islamic Republic of Iran with practical and constructive assistance rather than single-mindedly hurling accusations and exerting pressure through country-specific resolutions.

31. **Ms. Mozolina** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution and expressed surprise at the obstinacy with which the authors had brought it before the Third Committee for consideration each year. The Russian Federation was against the biased and politicized practice of submitting draft resolutions on the human rights situation in individual countries. Such draft resolutions should not be submitted to the Committee in future and the human rights situations in individual countries should be examined exclusively through the universal periodic review.

32. **Ms. del Águila Castillo** (Guatemala) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. Guatemala condemned the human rights violations in Iran and agreed with the concerns expressed in the most recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/70/411). It was regrettable however that, despite concrete proposal by several delegations, the draft resolution had disregarded the recent and historic agreement reached on the Iranian nuclear programme. Although that agreement did not make specific references to human rights, the lifting of sanctions provided for by it would impact the economic, social and political rights of Iranians. Country-specific resolutions should be objective, avoid bias and reflect a balance between concern for the human rights situation in the country and recognition of the efforts made by the respective Government. Guatemala therefore acknowledged the impact of that significant agreement. Nevertheless, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran must demonstrate to the international community in practical and tangible ways its readiness to continue to cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially by authorizing visits from the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteur.

33. **Mr.** Kyaw Tin (Myanmar) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, in line with Myanmar's principled position against country-specific resolutions. Such resolutions undermined one of the purposes of the United Nations: to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination. Furthermore, they often intervened in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of sovereign States and ran counter to the principles of

objectivity, impartiality and non-politicization. The universal periodic review was the least controversial and most dependable process for examining and improving all human rights situations in the world. The time had come to put an end to country-specific resolutions in the Third Committee and in the Human Rights Council.

34. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that the reports of the Special Rapporteur and the Secretary-General noted that serious human rights challenges persisted in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular the application of the death penalty, which his country unequivocally opposed. Nevertheless, there had been important developments over the last year which had brought new opportunities to strengthen the work of the Iranian Government with the international community and focus on the legitimate human rights concerns, which Mexico shared.

35. Beyond a punitive approach, priority should be given to cooperation, technical assistance and capacity-building, which would have a greater impact and create better opportunities for strengthening effective cooperation between the Iranian Government and the United Nations. With that in mind, Mexico had abstained from the vote on the draft resolution. However, that did not mean that Mexico was not concerned by the persistent violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

36. Mexico noted the commitment made by the Iranian authorities to be more open with the international human rights system. In the short-term, concrete steps must be taken towards strengthening Iran's cooperation with the various specialized mechanisms.

37. **Mr. Shin** Dong Ik (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation recognized the progress made by the Iranian Government since the adoption of last year's resolution, taking note in particular of its active participation in the second cycle of the universal periodic review and how it had mapped out services for victims of domestic violence and increased penalties for perpetrators of violence against women. It also noted with interest the proposed changes to legislation and administration, including a new code of criminal procedure. However, further progress needed to be made to meet the aspirations of the international community.

38. **Ms. Vraila** (Greece) said that although her delegation did not fully agree with all elements included in the draft resolution, it had aligned itself with the general position of the European Union and had therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

39. **The Chair** drew the attention to the statement of programme budget implications contained in document A/C.3/70/L.67.

40. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), presenting the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, said that, over the previous 12 months, the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic had continued to deteriorate. More than 250,000 Syrians had been killed in the conflict, more than 4 million refugees had left the country and more than 7.5 million had been displaced. Nearly 5 million people required humanitarian assistance. The Syrian authorities had continued to perpetrate atrocities, using various methods, including barrel bombs, heavy weaponry and chemical weapons, in flagrant violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. Many of those atrocities amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, foreign fighters were flocking to join the ranks of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist organizations, while other militias and groups had allied themselves with the regime. All parties to the conflict had committed the most heinous human rights violations. Instead of more troops or bombs, Syria needed capable leaders who could foster reconciliation among its people and provide security, shelter, health care and food for all.

41. The draft resolution, which addressed an unprecedented human rights situation, included calls for all perpetrators of human rights violations to be held accountable for their crimes, and for a Syrian-led political process leading to a political transition that met Syrians' legitimate aspirations.

42. The draft resolution was in fact situation-specific, rather than country-specific as some delegation claimed. It explicitly condemned terrorism, terrorist organizations and foreign terrorist fighters but drew on United Nations reports, including the most recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which had concluded that the Syrian regime was responsible for most acts of violence, murder and displacement.

43. The draft resolution also reaffirmed the international community's respect for the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and called for further efforts to uphold human rights in Syria and address the humanitarian aspects of the crisis, which would continue until the parties to the conflict reached a political solution in accordance with the Geneva communiqué.

44. Rather that addressing the substance of the issues contained in the draft resolution, the Syrian regime would endeavour to focus discussions on secondary issues involving the sponsors. The delegation of Saudi Arabia stood ready to refute all baseless allegations made against it, or against any of the other sponsors, by the representative of Syria. Any attempt to divert attention from the draft resolution on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic would prove unsuccessful, however, when television footage and photographs of dead Syrian children on the shores of the Mediterranean were still fresh in everyone's mind. Saudi Arabia urged delegations to listen to their consciences and to stand by the Syrian people by voting in favour of the draft resolution.

45. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Botswana, Iceland, Montenegro, Oman and Ukraine had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

46. **Ms. Vraila** (Greece) said that her delegation wished to withdraw its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

47. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Cuba and the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which they had underscored their principled rejection of country-specific resolutions.

48. His delegation deeply regretted attempts by certain delegations, including the delegations of certain Non-Aligned Movement members, to use the Committee to further their interventionist and narrow political agendas, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. Undermining the Human Rights Council, their conduct impeded the Committee from fulfilling its mandate to achieve social and humanitarian objectives, particularly in the area of human rights.

49. The Syrian Government reiterated its principled commitment to promoting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Syrians and believed that the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council was the most appropriate mechanism for addressing human rights issues.

50. The draft resolution submitted by Saudi Arabia and its allies was paradoxical, given that country's appalling human rights record, not only against foreign workers in the country, but also against its own citizens. It would have been more appropriate for the Committee to consider the Saudi Arabian human rights record. Saudi Arabia was, moreover, the main sponsor, supporter and financer of armed terrorist groups in Syria, was exacerbating the ongoing crisis in the country and was actively working to prevent a peaceful political resolution to the conflict by Syrians themselves, in accordance with the Geneva communiqué and relevant Security Council resolutions. Saudi Arabia or its citizens had perpetrated or sponsored acts of terrorism around the world, including in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, France and the United States, in a clear demonstration of the danger of entrusting excessive wealth to ignorant hands. The Saudi family regime, which had usurped power in the Arabian Peninsula, was untrustworthy and had no respect for the sanctity of Islam. Saudi Arabia would never be accepted as a civilized country until it upheld the fundamental human rights of its citizens, rather than flogging and decapitating them in its public squares, persecuting them for their beliefs and imprisoning them merely for writing a poem critical of their Government.

51. While the Syrian Government was striving to combat terrorism on behalf of the entire world, numerous terrorist groups, including ISIL and the Nusra Front, were receiving support from Saudi Arabia and its allies so that they could continue to perpetrate atrocities in Syria. Furthermore, according to a recently published article in a French newspaper, donations from Arabian Gulf States comprised some 10 per cent of the almost 3 billion euros that ISIL had received in 2015. The Governments of Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey also continued to facilitate the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and arms into Syrian territory with the goal of overthrowing the legitimate Syrian Government. Meanwhile, those States were complicit in and tacitly supported the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and, as stated by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Saudi Arabia and Israel were two countries that continued to speak with one voice.

52. The ruling *takfirist* family in Saudi Arabia was in no position to lecture Syria or any other country on democracy and human rights, particularly when it continued to deny its own people their right to participate in the country's legislature and parliament and prohibited women from riding bicycles or travelling without a male escort. It was inconceivable that Saudi Arabia would implement the provisions of the draft resolution on human rights within its own borders. The fact that Qatar and Saudi Arabia had sponsored the draft resolution was particularly ironic given that those countries steadfastly refused to comply with the Committee's annual resolution on global efforts to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. How could the Committee adopt those noble resolutions, while also adopting a resolution against Syrian men, women and children that contained provisions that were the very embodiment of hatred and extremism? The proposed draft resolution would also undermine efforts by Mr. de Mistura, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, to resolve the conflict.

53. It would take considerable time to address the numerous lies, inaccuracies and misleading information contained in the draft resolution. The Syrian delegation was particularly concerned, however, that the draft resolution had falsely attributed certain statements to the Special Envoy. Prior to the vote, the Secretary of the Committee should confirm the veracity of the information contained in paragraph 19 and should inform the Committee when and where the Special Envoy had delivered the statements mentioned in that paragraph.

54. According to the Director of the French Secret Services, the Syrian authorities had, two years previously, provided a list of French terrorists fighting in Syria to the Prime Minister of France, whose steadfast refusal to investigate the individuals on that list or engage with the Syrian authorities had resulted in the Paris attacks. Tens of thousands more terrorists from the Arabian Gulf and Europe were now being sent to Syria to commit atrocities.

55. Quoting poignant verses from a poem, he reminded the Committee that certain regimes had made a pact with the devil and that the time had come for States to listen to their consciences and bring to an end the misery that those regimes had inflicted on the people in the region.

56. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in addition to its unfair and politically motivated approach to human rights issues in the Syrian Arab Republic, the draft resolution contained troubling provisions that were unprecedented in a human rights resolution. If adopted, it would run counter to the basic principles of international law.

57. The content of paragraph 14 was particularly unacceptable because it condemned two forces that were part of the regular armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran which had been deployed in the Syrian Arab Republic on an exclusively advisory basis at the formal invitation of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and were resisting the terrorist onslaught in the country. Moreover, the paragraph denied the right of a Member State to establish peace and order on its territory, including through requesting assistance, and took an adverse and unwarranted position on the actions by the regular army of a sovereign Member State.

58. Paragraphs 14 and 16 sinisterly lumped together, falsely labelled and condemned those who were in the Syrian Arab Republic at the invitation of the Government to assist its legitimate fight against ISIL, the Nusra Front and their affiliates. The accusations levelled in those two paragraphs, apart from being totally baseless, had nothing to do with the mandate of the Third Committee, nor were they compatible with the title of a draft resolution which purported to deal with human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. Their incorporation into the draft resolution was tantamount to a kind of revenge against those who had so far been the most effective force on the ground against terrorism and violent extremism. If not for their genuine and resolute fight against terrorism, more of the Middle East would by now have fallen under the black flag of ISIL.

59. Parties with a narrow agenda must not be allowed to have their way: their baseless accusations and absolute condemnation would only poison the negotiating environment, which could ruin the prospects for finding a way out of the current impasse in the Syrian Arab Republic.

60. **Mr. Choe** Myong Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) reiterated his delegation's principled position against all country-specific resolutions submitted for consideration without the consent of the countries concerned. The human rights

situations of individual countries must be discussed and resolved in an atmosphere of genuine and constructive dialogue and cooperation, respecting the sovereignty, integrity, peace and stability of the countries concerned and contributing to real improvements in those countries. The most useful mechanism for the discussion of country-specific issues was the universal periodic review. For that reason, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

61. **Ms. Smaila** (Nigeria) said that country-specific resolutions should not be resorted to as a means of punishment or to score political points. They should be applied as redemptive measures, be invoked and applied sparingly, on a case-by-case basis, and must fully respect the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the countries in question. As far as practicable, they should also be time-specific and contain deadlines.

62. In the case of the Syrian Arab Republic where two or more parties were obviously involved in the conflict, her delegation found it difficult that only one side was being singled out, condemned and held to account. All sides must bear responsibility for their actions. However, the current wording of the draft resolution might bolster one side of the conflict and render the other intransigent, which could make the attainment of peace elusive.

63. Only a lasting political solution led by the Syrian people, free of outside pressure and interference, would be successful. Her delegation called on all sides of the Syrian conflict to lay down their arms and seek a just and peaceful settlement of their differences in order to find lasting peace and spare their country further bloodshed, misery and destruction.

64. **Ms. Sison** (United States of America) said that her delegation strongly supported the draft resolution and called on all delegations to vote in favour of it. As documented in the numerous reports by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, the Assad regime, associated militias and ISIL were committing extensive and ongoing violations and abuses, which must be forcefully condemned and for which accountability must be sought. The United States echoed the strong condemnation expressed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria regarding the Assad regime's destructive bombing across the Syrian Arab Republic. The international community must collectively support the victims of the Assad regime, who were often arbitrarily imprisoned, subjected to torture, sexual violence and inhumane conditions, denied fair trials, executed and forcibly disappeared.

65. The United States reiterated its call for an immediate end to all violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, especially the egregious, widespread and continued violations committed by the Assad regime. It urged continued support for the Special Envoy's efforts to promote a political transition that led to a future that fulfilled the aspirations of the Syrian people for peace, freedom and dignity. The international community must work together to end the atrocities, lay a foundation for justice and build sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic.

66. **Mr. Çevik** (Turkey) said that the crisis in Syria, which had started with the violent oppression by the Syrian regime of the democratic aspirations and the legitimate demands of the Syrian people, continued to threaten regional and international peace and security. The human rights of the Syrian people were being violated with increasing severity and impunity and, although the draft resolution could not, by itself, alleviate the immense suffering of the Syrian people, it would send a firm message that the international community refused to remain silent in the face of the gross human rights violations taking place in Syria and would hold the perpetrators accountable.

67. Steadfast in its support for the Syrian people, the Turkish delegation urged all delegations to vote in favour of the draft resolution. Categorically rejecting the baseless allegations made against his country by the representative of Syria, he emphasized that Turkey would continue to engage with all relevant international organizations, including the United Nations, in a transparent manner in order to provide assistance to Syrians.

68. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the repercussions of the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic were being felt throughout the region. It was therefore incumbent on the General Assembly to adopt a further resolution on the grave human rights violations being perpetrated against the Syrian people.

69. The draft resolution before the Committee was balanced, objective and anchored in the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It

referred to all parties that had committed human rights violations in Syria but underscored that most of those violations had been perpetrated by the Syrian regime.

70. The draft resolution highlighted the impact of the violence on women and children, and called for humanitarian assistance to be provided to those most in need. Moreover, it condemned the terrorist groups and foreign terrorist fighters operating in Syria and called for their immediate withdrawal.

71. It also addressed the Syrian refugee crisis, reaffirmed the need for a political solution that met the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and underscored the important role that Syrian women must be allowed to play in the country's future.

72. Voting in support of the draft resolution would send a clear message to the perpetrators of human rights violations in Syria that the international community would not tolerate their actions.

73. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), responding to the question posed earlier by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, said that the Secretariat was not in a position to either confirm or deny that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria had made statements communicating the information contained in paragraph 19 of the draft resolution. Neither could it provide details of when and where those statements were purportedly made. He noted, however, that the draft resolution provided no references for the statements attributed to the Special Envoy, suggesting that those statements had been delivered in an informal context rather than in a formal meeting, such as a meeting of the Security Council or General Assembly.

74. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) said that Mr. de Mistura, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, had made the comments in question in a press statement that he had delivered in Geneva, Switzerland on 30 May 2015. Instead of addressing the issues raised in the draft resolution, the delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic had, once again, levelled baseless allegations against Saudi Arabia and other countries. Moreover, the verses of poetry he had quoted were highly inappropriate and provided a clear insight into the nature of his character.

75. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the verses of poetry that he had recited earlier had been written by a Saudi poet. The Saudi representative's negative reaction to that poem had revealed his true nature.

76. With regard to paragraph 19 of the draft resolution, the Syrian delegation was well aware of the words spoken by Mr. de Mistura in Geneva on 30 May 2015 in Geneva: they had not been accurately reflected in that paragraph and it was indeed telling that the Secretariat was unable to confirm their veracity. Paragraph 19 misrepresented the mandate of the Special Envoy, whose efforts were deeply appreciated by the Syrian Government, and was personally insulting to him. Member States should refuse to adopt any draft resolution that cited manipulated statements that had been falsely attributed to the Special Envoy.

77. The Syrian Arab Republic had serious concerns about the draft resolution as a whole and was keenly aware of the true motives of its sponsors, who had no interest in alleviating the plight of the Syrian people and no desire to see the Syrian crisis resolved. Instead, by encouraging terrorists from all over the world to come to Syria to commit atrocities, the sponsors had Syrian blood on their hands. Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey were seeking to achieve their cheap political objectives and to undermine the mandate of Mr. de Mistura.

78. He strongly urged all Member States to vote against the draft resolution. Those States that were unable to do so because they were being blackmailed financially by the Saudi and Qatari regimes and by certain powerful countries should abstain or to leave the room prior to the vote. The real objectives and true intentions of the sponsors must be exposed.

79. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

80. **Mr Bessedik** (Algeria) said that human rights issues should be dealt with by the Human Rights Council, which had been established to avoid politicization and selectivity in human rights issues, especially under the universal periodic review process. Human rights concerns must be dealt with in a transparent and equitable manner, and through constructive dialogue. Bringing country-specific human rights issues to the attention of the General Assembly undermined the spirit and purposes of that Council.

81. Recent terrorist attacks, including in France, Lebanon, Nigeria and Turkey, underscored the need for

concerted international efforts to combat acts of terrorism, the most vicious of human rights violations. While the primary responsibility for upholding human rights lay with States' central authorities, the international community must encourage all steps to end the tragedy in Syria, including confidence-building measures that would support the political process.

82. As was the case with other country-specific resolutions on human rights, the draft resolution on the Syrian Arab Republic was counterproductive, and the Algerian delegation would therefore be compelled to vote against it.

83. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba) said that her delegation would vote against the draft resolution, owing to its punitive nature and its disregard for the interests and positions of the country concerned. The international community must set aside interventionist agendas and calls for regime change and seek political solutions that would consider the interests and aspirations of the Syrian people, which could not be achieved with resolutions attempting to undermine the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria.

84. Her delegation advocated for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the crisis and urged the Third Committee to contribute to that effort, not by means of condemnation and interventionist demands, but rather by fostering cooperation in full respect for the sovereignty of the Syrian State. To achieve success, the international community must once and for all abandon politically motivated and selective practices, such as the current draft resolution, which only unnecessarily delayed a solution.

85. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) reiterated her delegation's principled position against the adoption of country-specific resolutions, which were used to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States and exert pressure on Governments. The draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic undermined such fundamental principles as respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs; furthermore, it exerted pressure on only one side of the protracted and bloody conflict.

86. Only a settlement of the conflict would promote real respect for human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, whereas the ongoing conflict served to enflame the extremist mood and fuel the growth of terrorism. In that context, the country-specific resolution before the Committee further encouraged the logic of confrontation as a human rights policy imperative. Belarus could not support such action and would vote against the draft resolution.

87. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen.

Against:

Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican

Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.

88. *Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47 was adopted by 115 votes to 15, with 51 abstentions.*

89. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the draft resolution was a disservice to the Third Committee, contravened the basic principles of international law and did nothing but reward violent extremism and terrorism. It was revealing that the only reference to violent extremist ideologies, which had been included in the previous year's resolution, had been taken out of the present draft resolution. Instead, a list of the forces that had been resolutely combating terrorism and extremism had been included.

90. It was peculiar that a number of countries in the West that preached to others about human rights had sided with countries that, at the very least, had always exported intolerance to many parts of the world, to say nothing of what they did with the people inside their borders. It was very unfortunate that the structural weakness of the United Nations human rights mechanisms was providing those countries with the opportunity to abuse the system and have such resolutions issued. It was especially regrettable that, in the wake of the recent upsurge of barbaric terrorist attacks in France, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey, which should have brought the international community together in a united front against terrorism, the draft resolution was sowing discord in the anti-terrorist camp.

91. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that there could only be a political settlement to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. It was time for all parties to the conflict and their supporters to concede that insisting on a military solution would cause even more suffering to the Syrian people and increase political insecurity and instability in the region. Brazil urged all parties to prevent further militarization of the conflict and fully engage in ongoing negotiations in a spirit of compromise without preconditions.

92. While some of the language was out of place in a draft resolution on human rights, Brazil nevertheless commended the sponsors for addressing the situation of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic. He delegation called upon all States to facilitate the legal and safe arrival of persons affected by the Syrian conflict and to provide them with the protection they deserved, with full respect for and protection of their human rights. Brazil was fully committed to doing its part in alleviating the plight of Syrian refugees.

93. Although some important improvements had been made to the text, Brazil remained concerned about its unbalanced nature and simplistic approach to crucial aspects of the conflict. The draft resolution still failed to properly address the responsibility of several opposition armed groups, including ISIL and the Nusra Front, for gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the Syrian Arab Republic. The United Nations must remain impartial and never condone breaches of human rights and humanitarian law.

94. Regarding the use of toxic chemicals as weapons, the Security Council had established a joint investigative mechanism to determine which party to the conflict was responsible for their use. Its findings could not be prejudged without undermining the credibility of the process.

95. He also wished to reiterate that the "Caesar" report lacked the necessary legitimacy to be mentioned in any United Nations decision.

96. Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to support all efforts directed at building a political solution to the Syrian conflict through transparent, inclusive and non-sectarian negotiations. The international community must contribute to a Syrian-led peace process to bring the country back to the path of social development and peace.

97. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador) said that his delegation was concerned about the recent deterioration of the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. It condemned all human rights violations; there should be no impunity for those responsible for committing acts of violence or supplying arms to parties to the conflict, including organized terrorist groups. His delegation expressed solidarity with the Syrian people. References had been made to non-interference in the internal affairs of States, but that policy had only served to exacerbate the violence, weaken the Syrian State and strengthen

the terrorist organizations. The draft resolution did not sufficiently consider all the parties responsible for the crisis and would not help to achieve a peaceful solution with the participation of all Syrians and with full respect for Syrian sovereignty and independence. Human rights matters should be addressed by the Human Rights Council. The practice of presenting draft resolutions of that nature to the Third Committee served only to politicize the issue and did not help the victims of armed violence in Syria. For that reason, Ecuador had voted against the draft resolution.

98. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) reiterated his delegation's principled position regarding country-specific resolutions, special rapporteurs and other human rights mechanisms. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela rejected the politically motivated and selective nature of those mechanisms, which were a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity, which were necessary in addressing human rights issues. Cooperation and dialogue were essential principles for the effective promotion and protection of human rights. For that reason, his delegation supported the ongoing appeals made by the Non-Aligned Movement on the issue. Venezuela once again urged the international community to continue the progress made by the Human Rights Council and to prioritize the universal periodic review process and take a collaborative approach to the human rights issue. He called for an end to the selective adoption of country-specific resolutions, which weakened the mandate of the Human Rights Council.

99. **Mr. Salam** (Lebanon) said that, with a view to safeguarding its integrity and stability, his country had consistently maintained a neutral stance with regard to the ongoing crisis in Syria and had abstained from voting on all draft resolutions on that crisis that were submitted to the United Nations and the League of Arab States for adoption. He emphasised however that, despite its abstention from voting on the present draft resolution, his country continued to support all efforts to end the violence in Syria, achieve a political solution to the ongoing crisis, address the needs of all those it had displaced and provide support to States hosting Syrian refugees. Hezbollah, to which reference had been made in the draft resolution, was a Lebanese political party that participated in his country's parliament and Government. He reaffirmed his country's principled position that a distinction must be made between terrorism and legitimate resistance against foreign occupation and underscored the key role played by Hezbollah in the struggle against the Israeli occupation.

100. **Mr. Marani** (Argentina) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because his country prioritized defending human rights and protecting victims. All parties must put an end to the violence and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

101. Argentina emphatically rejected the perverse and barbarous acts of terrorism committed by ISIL and its affiliates, which not only threatened human life and dignity, but also the integrity and sovereignty of the affected States. Argentina supported the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and called on all States to refrain from intervening through political, economic or militaristic means by supplying weapons, munitions or financing to the parties. Argentina had repeatedly called for an end to the provision of military equipment to the parties to the conflict and once again warned of the dangers of creating and empowering future terrorist groups similar to ISIL.

102. The use of chemical weapons by any actor under any circumstance was reprehensible and ran counter to the norms and standards of the international community. Argentina had therefore supported undertaking a swift, independent and objective investigation within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

103. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States must be respected, in keeping with the basic principle of respect for the sovereignty of States established in the Charter of the United Nations. The only way to end the conflict in Syria was dialogue, negotiation and peaceful resolution through substantive agreements.

104. **Mr. Liang** Heng (China) reiterated that it was China's consistent position that any differences in the area of human rights should be addressed through constructive cooperation and dialogue on an equal footing and on the basis of mutual respect. China was opposed to politicizing and exploiting the human rights issue to pressurize other countries and objected to country-specific human rights resolutions, which was why his delegation had voted against the draft resolution.

105. **Mr. Lauber** (Switzerland), speaking on behalf of Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland, said that their countries were committed to improving the ever-worsening situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Third Committee and the Human Rights Council had an important role to play in that regard, and their countries had therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution. However, the General Assembly could and should do better in addressing the dramatic human rights situation in Syria.

106. While the political aspects of the crisis had a direct impact on the human rights situation, such aspects should not take centre stage when systematic attacks against the civilian population continued unabated and a culture of impunity was pervasive, in part as a result of inaction by the international community. There was a danger that such an approach, arising from frustration with the Security Council's inability to make political progress, weakened the human rights message sent to the parties to the conflict.

107. It was disappointing that a number of suggestions that could have sharpened the human rights focus of the draft resolution had not been taken up. In future, the consultations process should be strengthened to give enough time to examine fully all suggestions from all sponsors.

108. Lastly, the language in operative paragraph 22 could have been streamlined and strengthened to clarify that there was a need not only to promote accountability, but also to hold the perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law to account. The language on the recruitment and use of children in conflict could also have been brought into line with best practice.

109. **Ms. Mozolina** (Russian Federation) said that the draft resolution was another attempt to turn the Third Committee into a body that rubber-stamped politicized country-specific resolutions with the aim of exerting pressure on the Government of a Member State. Such an approach was not acceptable to the Russian Federation in principle.

110. The draft resolution unfortunately brought an atmosphere of conflict and mistrust to the General Assembly at a time when it was vital for the international community to consolidate efforts to combat international terrorism. By placing the blame for all that was happening in the Syrian Arab Republic on its Government, the draft resolution was at cross-purposes with the aim of achieving a political settlement of the crisis. For all the idle accusations against the Syrian authorities of human rights violations, nothing was said of the many crimes of various anti-government armed groups. The Russian Federation had thus voted against the draft resolution.

111. **Ms. Vrailа** (Greece) said that Greece was fully aware of the grave human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the urgent need for a political solution, and was thus in favour of the draft resolution. Nevertheless her delegation could not agree with the inclusion of the Al-Quds Brigades and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps in paragraph 14 and had therefore abstained from the vote.

112. **Ms. Pritchard** (Canada) said that Canada understood that the intention of the seventh preambular paragraph was to express the global outrage at widespread and systematic violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. In that context, the language on chlorine gas should not be misinterpreted to imply that the indiscriminate use of chlorine gas was what made it unlawful under international humanitarian law; it was the use of chlorine gas in all circumstances that constituted a violation of international humanitarian law, irrespective of whether it was used indiscriminately.

113. **Ms. Lucas** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, as the largest donor, the European Union had demonstrated its willingness and commitment to do what it could to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. The latest phase of the Syrian civil war had been marked by a military escalation that risked prolonging the conflict, undermining the United Nations-led political process, aggravating the humanitarian situation and increasing radicalization. Only a Syrian-led political process leading to a peaceful and inclusive transition, based on the principles of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012, would bring back stability, enable peace and reconciliation, create the necessary environment for efficient counter terrorism efforts and maintain the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. There could not be lasting peace under the present leadership and until the legitimate grievances and aspirations of all components of Syrian society had been addressed. The European Union was actively supporting the commitments made by the International Syria Support Group in Vienna on 14 November 2015 with a view to

launching an intra-Syrian political process and achieving a nationwide ceasefire.

114. With regard to the reference to foreign terrorist fighters, foreign organizations and foreign forces fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime in paragraph 14, she said that it was important to ensure that resolutions on human rights concerns remained objective and were not overtly politicized.

115. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that Japan agreed with the thrust of the draft resolution and had consistently sponsored such resolutions submitted to the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council. In so doing, it took into consideration whether the draft resolution accurately reflected the dire human rights situation in the country, as well as its foreign policy on the Syrian Arab Republic. While Japan felt uncomfortable with the reference to the Al-Quds Brigades and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, it had maintained its support for the draft resolution with a view to keeping the overall message intact. Japan sincerely hoped that all relevant actors in the Syrian Arab Republic would take heed of the message and work towards improving the situation.

116. **Ms. Kaszás** (Hungary) said that Hungary reiterated its deep concern about the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. It strongly condemned the indiscriminate attacks, atrocities, mass killings and conflict-related sexual violence, and called on all parties to respect international human rights and humanitarian law.

117. Underlining its concerns regarding paragraphs 14 and 16 of the draft resolution, which referred to foreign terrorist fighters, foreign organizations and foreign forces fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime, Hungary was of the view that resolutions on human rights should avoid politicization. It regretted the lack of transparent consultations on the draft resolution which had prevented the valuable concerns of States from being reflected in the final text. In future, it hoped that such unnecessary divisive issues would be avoided.

118. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) expressed his appreciation to delegations that had voted in favour of the draft resolution and assured States that their views would be taken into consideration. He sincerely hoped that in future the Committee would not need to adopt similar draft resolutions on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.